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ALDERMAN HARDING'S VISIT TO THE READY-MADE CLOTHES SHOP.

## THE CLOUD WITH A SILVER LINING.

### CHAPTER III.

MARY BEVAN was very ill. Privation, anxiety, exposure to cold, walking on damp pavements in shoes which admitted water as easily as though

made of brown paper, the vitiated atmosphere of a close and ill-drained street in a large town—all these causes combined, (any one of which has opened an untimely grave,) brought Mary to the verge of death. But she had fallen into good hands

at last, and to the care of Doctor Waring the physician, Mrs. Jackson the nurse, Old Betty, and the motherly housekeeper of Mr. Harding, we may for a little while leave her.

When a man of easy-going habits, by any apparent accident sets himself in right earnest to a good work, such as the correction of a newly-discovered abuse, or the remedy of some evident mishap, it is astonishing how much stir he can make, and how, for a time, he can outstep his generally more active contemporaries. Mr. Alderman Harding was a good man, and, to an extent that did not involve much personal exertion or trouble, a benevolent man. He liked proxy better than active benevolence, however; and thought it enough, ordinarily at least, to give money where others gave diligence. The inheritor of a fair fortune, the possessor of a comfortable house and tolerable library, he had passed along on one of the smooth highways of life pleasantly enough, thinking little of the wretched by-ways which conducted others, through thorns and briers, and over flinty ground intersected by many a slough of despond, to the same termination of mortal joys and sorrows, loves and hatreds. Bred to no profession, and with no sharp spur to the exercise of his talents, he rarely exerted himself or them; and if his conscience sometimes told him that the enjoyment of his comfortable habits, his literary tastes, and his un-selfdenying benevolence, though sanctified and modified in a measure by personal piety, was not precisely and strictly all that he should live for, he was too apt to meet the remonstrance with excuses somewhat akin to that of Moses, when he said, "Oh Lord, I am not eloquent; I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue."

Nevertheless, Mr. Harding was not quite easy, at all times, under these rebukes; and when, on the morning after his interview with James Underwood, he started up from his breakfast-table, put on his hat, took in hand his walking-stick, and went off at a lively pace to the town-prison, he felt something like the vigour of returning youth; and people, as he passed, wondered what made the Alderman so brisk that morning.

He did not find young Bevan in a particularly contrite frame of mind. The boy had got over the first emotions of shame at the degradation to which he had fallen, and met with sullen and almost haughty silence the first advances of the visitor, whom he recognised as one of the magistrates who had sat in judgment on him the previous day. But a word or two, judiciously introduced, about his sister, softened him at once.

"Has she had anything to eat since I left her?" he asked eagerly, and burst into tears. And when assured that she was well cared for, and should not be lost sight of, the young prisoner thanked Mr. Harding with immeasurable volubility.

"I don't care now," he added; "they may do what they like with me. I am glad I—"

"What are you glad of?" asked the visitor, when the boy stopped short.

"It doesn't signify, sir. Well then, I am glad I was sent here."

"Glad you turned *thief*, eh?"

"You may call me thief, if you please, sir; I can't help it: but if my going shares in that loaf sent help to Mary, I am glad of it."

"Help would have reached your sister without your doing wrong, boy," replied the magistrate, calmly. "Sometimes God pleases that the wrongdoing of one shall seem to bring about good to others; but that does not make sin less sinful. And it was not your dishonesty that raised up friends for your sister, but another person's honesty. We won't talk about that now, however. I wish to know something of your history, and your sister's: and mind you speak the truth."

"I am not a liar," said the boy—not sullenly, however: "indeed I am not, sir."

"Well, perhaps not; but let me hear what account you can give of yourself: your name is Bevan, you say?"

We shall not follow the magistrate through his unofficial examination, which terminated in an arrangement with the jailor to keep the boy apart from evil companions. "I wish to serve you," he added, turning to Bevan; "and I am not sure that I can do anything better for you than this. I will see you again. By the way, you will find a Bible in your cell; I advise you to spend your unoccupied time in reading it."

"And my sister, sir?" said the boy—"shall I see her?"

"Another day," returned the Alderman, evasively.

Mr. Alderman Harding left the prison full of thought. There was food for thought in the story he had just heard, and which exactly tallied with what he had been told by the second-hand bookseller, only that it went more into detail. Of course, it was not altogether new information to him that there was poverty in the world, and even in Summerville; nor was it a new idea to him that destitution is the next step in advance of poverty, and starvation just a step beyond destitution. He was not entirely ignorant that there are temptations connected with these states which do not so strongly assail any other. He had heard of the condition of needlewomen in general, and shirt-makers in particular, as not being exceedingly enviable in the way of emolument; and he did not suppose that they had hot roast-meat every day for dinner; and he had not fallen into the error of supposing, that when the poor cannot get bread to eat, they may manage to exist upon buns. Mr. Alderman Harding had also heard of instances in which persons of superior rank and attainments and character, such, for instance—and only for instance—as the widows and orphans of professional men, had had to drink to the very dregs the cup of bitter poverty, or almost bitter dependence on common charity; and he had joined in the common reproach—too frequently merited perhaps—of recklessness or improvidence, not entirely confined to professional men, though. But all that he had heard and seen had not prepared him for the fact, now brought home to his understanding, that, within a mile of his residence—and if it had been within a stone's throw he would perhaps have been none the wiser—had struggled on, day by day, for two years, till heart and hope were lost, and life itself did not seem worth struggling for any longer, two children, whose tender years had beamed with the promise of future prosperity, and honourable rank in society, to be only suddenly and apparently irremediably blasted. He had not been prepared to meet, in his

own daily walk and experience, with a case in which, without blame to the sufferer, and in spite of heroic endurance and stout-heartedness, a tender and well-nurtured girl had lain down to die for want of the bread that perisheth ; or with another in which, as with that girl's brother, continued privation had undermined, and temptation broken down, the barriers which had separated the precious from the vile, and added another atom to the mass of crime *not* resulting from ignorance :—cases, both, in which an outstretched hand and a loving heart, gently probing the disease, and suggesting and applying the remedy, would have called down the blessings of those who were ready to perish, and supplied motive for a hopeful continuance in well-doing. Such were some of Mr. Harding's thoughts; and he learnt a practical lesson therefrom.

Before the term of Willy's imprisonment had expired, his sister, thanks to good nursing, had recovered her strength ; and then came consultations between the Alderman, his housekeeper, and James Underwood, as to what next should be done. To have restored her to life, merely to pass through the same hopeless struggles which had brought her near to death, would have been poor charity. So Mr. Harding declared. In the course of these consultations, it came out, on the testimony of the young sempstress, corroborated by the researches of the Alderman's housekeeper, that Mary Bevan had sometimes been able to earn eightpence a day, sometimes ninepence, and sometimes only sixpence ; something depending on the kind and quality of work she could obtain, and something also on the number of hours which made up her working-day.

"Eightpence a day, for fourteen hours' labour!" exclaimed Mr. Harding ; "and days and weeks without work at all ! and with that to keep soul and body together—to buy firing and food, to pay rent, not for herself only, but also for the boy ! I never heard of such a thing ! I could not have thought it ! Are you sure you don't make a mistake, Mrs. Jackson?"

Yes, Mrs. Jackson was sure. And she knew, also, that the case was not by any means an extraordinary one.

"Why, Mrs. Jackson, I wonder the poor girl hasn't been driven to ruin herself, body and soul. She must have good principles, I am sure."

"A good many do ruin themselves, I am afraid, sir," said Mrs. Jackson, "that haven't such strong temptations ; and some, I dare say, are in a manner driven to it by want. Yes, sir, I think the poor girl has indeed very good principles."

"I should think so ; it must be so. Eightpence a day ! only think, Mrs. Jackson ! and for two of them ! There's something wrong somewhere ;" and, so saying, Mr. Alderman Harding took up his hat and stick, and walked towards the high-street of Summerville.

It was Saturday evening ; the shops, especially the provision shops, were crowded with customers, and the street was pretty well thronged with passengers ; mostly working people and their wives, who had done, or were going to do, their shopping. Among these, Mr. Harding threaded his way till he reached the ready-made clothes' shop near the bottom of the high-street.

He went in. There were a good many buyers

there ; so, going to the far end of the shop, he sat down, and waited. There was a working man, in a fustian jacket, at that part of the shop, looking at ready-made shirts. Mr. Harding nodded to the dealer opposite, said he was in no hurry, and looking on with a curious eye, he listened also with a curious ear.

"How much do you want for this?" asked the man. The *this* was a calico shirt which he held in his hand.

"One and ninepence," said the dealer.

"That's too much by threepence," said the buyer ; "I'll give you eighteen-pence for it."

"We never make abatement, my friend," replied the shopkeeper. "One and ninepence is my price."

"I could get it cheaper at the other shop," retorted the man ; "I saw some ticketed up there, one and sevenpence halfpenny a-piece."

"Very likely," returned the seller ; "but the quality is inferior. Here's one you may have for one and sevenpence, if you like."

The man put the cheaper article away contemptuously. "I won't have it. I shall have this or none. Come, twenty-pence, then ; let's have half a pint of beer out of it."

"I cannot afford to sell it for less than one and ninepence," said the tradesman, good-humouredly.

"I dare say not," replied the other, incredulously.

"There are three yards and three-quarters of calico in that shirt, my friend, at fourpence a yard ; and that alone comes to fifteen-pence."

"Sixpence profit for you, then," exclaimed the man with an oath : "I have to work hard for every sixpence I get. I won't give more than twenty-pence : take it or leave it."

"It must be 'leave it' then, my friend ; but you need not swear about it, either. You make a slight mistake, however, about my profits. Remember, the calico wants putting together to make a shirt."

"Not much of that, master. 'Tis done with a hot needle and a burning thread, I reckon."

"Needles and thread, hot or cold, cost something, I suppose you will allow ; but that is not what I mean. How much do you suppose I paid for making this shirt now ?"

"That's no business of mine," said the working man.

"But it is of mine. Come, my friend, I don't mind letting you into the secrets of the trade. The calico for this shirt comes to one and threepence : cotton and buttons cost a penny ; that's one and fourpence ; and for making it I pay fourpence : now, how much profit does that produce me when I sell it for one and ninepence ?"

The man replied, with another oath, that he didn't know and didn't care : that he could get as good a shirt elsewhere for twenty-pence ; and that he wouldn't give more.

"You don't wish shirt-makers to starve, do you, my friend ? If I were to sell articles of this quality at your price, I must give a penny less for making. You wouldn't wish that I suppose ? You know what it is to earn money by hard work yourself ; you have some feeling for others, I should think."

"I don't care what you give or what you don't

give. Let them starve for what I care. Twenty-pence, master ; that's my price."

" It is not mine, then," replied the tradesman ; and thrusting the crumpled bundle of shirts on to a vacant shelf, he coolly wished the customer good evening. The man went away shirtless, but returned in a minute, and threw down his money on the counter. " I may as well have it," he said : " 'tis less trouble than going to the other shop."

Now, Mr. Alderman Harding's errand to Mr. Wilkins's shop was two-fold. In the first place, it was his intention to reclaim Mary Bevan's watch and ring, taking upon himself, if need were, to stand sponsor for her future honesty ; and, in the second place, he had armed himself with strong and forcible arguments in favour of advanced wages to shirt-makers. The scene he had just witnessed, however, rather staggered him, and threw his ideas into some degree of confusion ; and it was with less confidence than he had half an hour before anticipated, that he opened his business to the shopkeeper.

The first part of it was soon transacted. Mr. Wilkins expressed himself perfectly satisfied with so good a guarantee as that of the Alderman, and placed in his hands the tangible security he had hitherto held.

" Is it needful to take such pledges as these for the honesty of your workpeople, Mr. Wilkins ?"

Yes, Mr. Wilkins had found it needful, he said ; in the case of comparative strangers, at all events. It was no uncommon thing for workwomen to pledge at the pawnbroker's the goods entrusted to them for making up.

" And how can you, or any one else, wonder at their principles giving way, Mr. Wilkins, when you think of the wretched compensation they receive for their labour ?" He had knocked the right nail on the head, there, Mr. Harding thought : and perhaps he had.

The shopkeeper met the remark with imperturbable good humour, and admitted that the condition of neediewomen was unsatisfactory.

Could not Mr. Wilkins do something, in his sphere, to mend it ?

" You heard what passed just now with my customer ? No, sir, I cannot mend it. On the contrary, I shall be driven, by competition, to reduce my wages. I cannot help it, Mr. Harding ; if I could, I would."

" It is a desperate necessity, Mr. Wilkins, for a poor girl or woman to sit working hard all day, for the few pence they can earn at shirt-making. There's that girl, Mary Bevan—" and the Alderman commented upon her history, and detailed her past privations and utter destitution.

" I am vey sorry for it, Mr. Harding ; I never knew anything of her history before ; and I was not aware that she so entirely depended on my work. But, if I had, I don't know what I could have done. I have twice as many applicants for work as I can employ, and some must go without. And perhaps you will scarcely credit it, sir ; but only this week I have had an offer made by the lady managers of St. Sycamore charity school, of having shirts made by the dozen. They want work, it seems, for the girls ; and they offer to make any number of common shirts at three shillings a dozen."

" And you accepted it ?"

" I have not decided yet. If my workwomen will come down to the threepence—no : if they won't—yes."

" But if you must give such low wages for this inferior work, you are not, surely, ground down so closely in better articles ?"

" No, not exactly as regards amount ; but almost as closely in proportion. Better articles require better work, and take longer time to execute. Look here, sir ;" — and Mr. Wilkins laid his hand on a pile of shirts, cut out but not made up ; — " the materials for each of these cost me, as nearly as possible, five shillings. They are to be made to order, and the work is to be of a superior description ; and yet I am so tied down to price that I am positive the woman who is going to make them will not be able to earn a shilling a day—nothing like it, Mr. Harding. Well, sir, I cannot help it. If the lady—for a lady gave me the order, and a rich lady too—if she would have given another sixpence a piece, that sixpence, or the greater part of it, would have gone into the workwoman's pocket ; but she would not, and I am obliged to cut the coat, as we say, according to the cloth. The materials I cannot get cheaper ; but the work I can ; and where I can economize, I must."

" I wonder you can get women to work for you at all," said the Alderman : " I would not ; I would strike——"

" And starve. No, sir, that would not do. They know that if one won't work, another will, and they are too glad to take what offers. It is not come to the worst yet, I am afraid. In a short time, we shall see competition—competition for business on one hand, and competition for work on the other—bringing down wages to sixpence a day, or less."

" And then, when things are got to the worst, they will mend, I suppose you think ?"

" I don't know, Mr. Harding : I hope they may."

" It is competition, then, that does the mischief ?"

" I don't say that, sir. Competition is a good thing, when it is not carried too far."

" Then what is to be done ?" asked Mr. Harding, impatiently.

" I cannot tell you, sir : it would take a wiser head than mine to answer that question."

Mr. Harding left the shop more puzzled than ever. " There is something wrong somewhere," he said, again and again. But where ? He could not find out what shoulders to lay it on. He was dissatisfied, too, with the conference. Mr. Wilkins had told the truth, no doubt ; but was the difficulty insuperable ?

We think not. It is a good general principle, to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market ; but, like all other principles, it has its exceptions. When making our purchases, another maxim may well be present with us, " Live and let live ;" and better still, " Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them." These rules kept in view, when purchases are made, would temper the rigour of competition and soothe many an aching heart.

The moon was shining, near its full, as Mr. Harding retraced his steps up the high-street ; but

dark clouds obscured it. The Alderman looked up. One dark black cloud there was, which cast a gloomy shadow below. But it was not all gloom above.

"The sable cloud  
Turned forth her silver lining on the night,"

said Mr. Harding to himself, quoting the words of one of England's noblest poets, as he saw the bright edging of the dark cloud; and he remembered that what looked so black seen from below, would be bright if seen from above.

"There's a silver lining to *every* cloud," he continued, "if we had but eyes to see it, or faith to believe it. 'The Lord God omnipotent reigneth;' and though 'clouds and darkness are round about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.'" And Mr. Harding no longer trod the street in painful uncertainty.

The "cloud that had hung over the orphans of Summerville had a silver lining; but we shall not pursue their history any further than to say that Mary, when she regained strength, found that she was no longer desolate and friendless; and that Willy, when released from prison, found that more hopeful prospects had dawned upon him. We have hope of him that he has learned wisdom by experience, and that he did not disgrace his benefactor. Mr. Underwood tells us that it is "all right," and we believe him.

As to Mr. Alderman Harding, as he gets older he becomes more active in his benevolence than he used to be. A new, or a more distinct, light seems to have broken in upon him; and there is not a man in Summerville better known than he. When the ear hears him, it blesses him; and when the eye sees him, it gives witness to him. He hopes and believes that there is a better time coming yet than some philanthropists dream about, and he does what he can to help it on. Nevertheless, he gives more discriminately in charity than formerly, for he feels that "it is a far better thing to help a man to help himself, than to do everything for a man. In the one case, you promote dependence; in the other, independence. In the one case, you throw a man down, and keep him down, under the burden of what you have done for him; but, in the other case, you help him so silently and gently and sweetly that the man does not feel as if he were under any obligation to you: he looks you full in the face, and you walk together, not as the benefactor and the beneficiary, but as brothers and friends."

#### AN OLD MAN'S RECOLLECTIONS.

##### THE GREAT LION FIGHT.

It has been with no love for the brutal conflicts of the animal creation, brought about by the agency of more brutal men; but with the strongest abhorrence of cruelty, in all its forms, that we have been led to turn over the dusty files of old newspapers, to refresh our memory with respect to the Great Lion Fight, which, at the time it took place, made so much noise in the world.

Whether the lion be the courageous, noble, and magnanimous animal that most people suppose, or the slinking, cowardly creature which others have represented him to be, we will not presume to decide; having never profited by his cowardice, nor been indebted to his clemency. Perhaps truth lies between these descriptions; but whatever be his qualities, he is what his Almighty Maker has made him, and if caught and caged to gratify the curiosity of man, he should be protected from wanton barbarity, and have his captivity mitigated by kindness.

Since the merciless combat we are about to describe took place, young men have grown grey, and a fresh generation of human beings has been called into existence. More than one half, perhaps, of the readers of "The Leisure Hour" were unborn at the time of the Great Lion Fight, and to such accordingly the event must be but little known.

The introduction of zoological gardens has rendered us much more familiar with the animal creation than we formerly were. True, there were lions in the Tower of London in the days of our fathers, and caravans of wild creatures visited our wakes and fairs; but opportunities of seeing the king of beasts were then "few and far between." For the last thirty or forty years the travelling wild beast show of Wombwell has been well known. It was with a view of getting money by bringing his lions more into public notice, that the proprietor, in the year 1825, spread widely the report that he had matched his largest lion to fight with six dogs of the bull and mastiff breed, for a stake of five thousand pounds. This report created a sensation of no common kind, exciting the indignation of the humane, and pandering to the barbarity of the cruel. The sporting classes were in a fever, and the dog-fighting world rabid with anticipation. The press, to its credit be it spoken, was loud in its denunciations of a spectacle so inhuman; but covetousness is cruel, and Wombwell was not to be persuaded to abandon the golden harvest he hoped to reap.

It had been more than two centuries since a lion fight had taken place in England; the encounter, in the reign of James I., when mastiffs were matched against a lion for the entertainment of the court, having been the last exhibition of this kind. Some naturalists there were, though we trust their number was not great, who altogether lost sight of the inhumanity of the spectacle in the ardour of their desire to know the relative degree of superiority possessed by the lion over the mastiff and bull-dog.

The most celebrated of Wombwell's lions was Nero, a tame and inoffensive creature, though of great stature and majestic appearance; and it was this animal that was reported to have been matched by Wombwell against the six dogs. He was whelped in the capital of Scotland, and had been brought up as tame as a lap-dog. Wallace was a smaller, but a much more savage and formidable animal. Nero and Wallace were both known to us, and we have some indistinct remembrance of seeing the famous dog Billy, a week or two after the battle, with his wounded head strapped up and his loins injured; but we were not present at the lion fight. Had we been there, even at this remote period of time, we should have blushed to

\* Rev. S. Martin's speech at the annual meeting of the British and Foreign School Society.

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acknowledge so discreditable a fact. Warwick we know, and have often wandered through its famous castle, lingering not only in the grand armoury, and in the greenhouse containing the celebrated vase, but also in the porch of the gateway, looking at the great porridge pot of the renowned Guy; but our reminiscences are not shadowed by the cruelty of a lion fight.

By many it was supposed that the reported bet of five thousand pounds, said to have been made by Wombwell, was all a fabrication, and little doubt of this was afterwards entertained. As the day of the fight approached, public excitement became extreme; humanity was more urgent in its appeal, and indignation louder in its thunders. Private individuals used their influence to dissuade Wombwell from his purpose, and the press redoubled its importunity and condemnation; but the lion owner was obdurate to entreaty and reproach.

Among the written appeals that were made to Wombwell, one is too excellent in itself, and too honourable to its writer, to be omitted. The following letter was sent by a gentleman of the Society of Friends:—

"Friend—I have heard, with a great degree of horror, of an intended fight between a lion that has long been exhibited by thee, consequently has long been under thy protection, and six bull-dogs. I seem impelled to write to thee on the subject, and to entreat thee, I believe in Christian love, that, whatever may be thy hope of gain by this very cruel and very disgraceful exhibition, thou wilt not proceed. Recollect that they are God's creatures; and we are informed by the holy scriptures that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice; and as this very shocking scene must be to gratify a spirit of cruelty, as well as a spirit of gambling—for it is asserted that large sums of money are wagered on the event of the contest—it must be marked with Divine displeasure. Depend upon it that the Almighty will avenge the sufferings of his tormented creatures on their tormentors; for, though he is a God of love, he is also a God of justice; and I believe that no deed of cruelty has ever passed unpunished. Allow me to ask thee how thou wilt endure to see the noble animal thou hast so long protected, and which has been in part the means of supplying thee with the means of life, mangled and bleeding before thee. It is unmanly, it is mean and cowardly to torment anything that cannot defend itself—that cannot speak to tell its pains and sufferings—that cannot ask for mercy. Oh, spare thy poor lion the pangs of such a death as may perhaps be his; save him from being torn to pieces; have pity on the dogs that may be torn by him. Spare the horrid spectacle; spare thyself the sufferings that I fear will yet reach thee if thou persist, and show a noble example of humanity. Whoever have persuaded thee to expose thy lion to the chance of being torn to pieces, or of tearing other animals, are far beneath the brutes they torment—are unworthy the name of men or rational creatures. Whatever thou mayest gain by this disgraceful exhibition will, I fear, prove like a canker-worm among the rest of thy substance. The writer of this most earnestly entreats thee to refrain from the intended evil, and to protect the animals in thy possession from all unnecessary

suffering. The practice of benevolence will afford thee more true comfort than the possession of thousands. Remember that He who gave life did not give it to be the sport of cruel man; and that He will assuredly call man to account for his conduct towards his dumb creatures. Remember, also, that cowards are always cruel; but the brave love mercy, and delight to save. With sincere desire for the preservation of thy honour, as a man of humanity, and for thy happiness and welfare, I am, thy friend,

S. HOARE."

Of this communication the *Times* observes:—"Nothing could be so well said by any other person, as it has by a humane and eloquent member of the Society of Friends, in his excellent though unavailing letter to Wombwell. What must have been the texture of that mind on which such sentiments could make no impression?"

The place fixed upon for the fight was a hollow square enclosure, in the suburbs of Warwick, on the road to Northampton, called "The Old Factory Yard." Two sides of this hollow square were occupied by the empty workshops of the Old Factory, many stories high, the windows of which were fitted up and furnished with seats, and the other two sides were filled up with caravans of wild beasts. The cage, formed of iron bars, in which the combat was to take place, stood in the middle of the enclosure. It was about fifteen feet square and ten high, with room between the bars for the dogs to run in and out, while the floor of it was elevated as much as four or five feet from the ground.

Wombwell's expectations of profit must have been unreasonable, for the charges at first demanded were excessive and extravagant. Half a guinea for standing places; seats at remote windows, a guinea; fourth-floor seats, two guineas; and seats on the first, second, and third floors, three guineas each. These prices, however, could not be sustained. Whether it was that the disgust which the announcement of the fight had called forth, or some other cause, had operated to prevent many from being present who would willingly have attended, certain it is that the gathering fell very short of what had been anticipated. Too many there were present, but not enough to be very encouraging to Wombwell in his barbarous enterprise.

A fit sort of prelude to the inhuman spectacle which was about to take place occurred in the night before the combat, for eight dogs, intended to be opposed to the lion, having been placed together by their brutal guardian instead of being kept asunder, their natural ferocity prevailed. A general fight took place, in which one dog was killed outright, and another lost an ear and a part of his cheek. Their keeper said it was not his fault, but the dogs'; for they "didn't ought to quarrel," being "all on the same side."

During the morning of the day on which the combat was to take place, the dogs that were to fight were made a show of at the Green Dragon, at an admittance price of sixpence or a shilling. In the caravans round the yard, besides the lion Nero, the hero of the day, were three other lions, a lioness, a she-wolf with cubs, two leopards with cubs, a white bear, a hyena, two zebras, wild asses, monkeys, and a multitude of other creatures. Nero lay quiet in his own caravan, looking uncon-

cernedly at the preparations making for his own annoyance.

Wombwell's trumpeters, arrayed in gaudy colours, mounted on horses, were sent forth through the streets of Warwick, Leamington, and the villages near, to announce the coming fight. Seven o'clock in the evening was the hour fixed on for the commencement of the combat. Accommodations were made for a thousand people to witness the fight, and about five hundred attended. The money taken may be roundly stated to be four hundred pounds, and the expenses were about one hundred. The three hundred pounds profit were but a miserable indemnity for so much inhumanity, sin, and disgrace.

Of the six dogs which were to fight, Turk and Tiger were brown; Captain, fallow and white; Rose, skewbald; Nettle, brindled with a black head; and Nelson, white with brindled spots. Many had foretold that Nero the lion was too tame to fight, and this afterwards proved to be a correct prognostication. Nero having entered the iron cage from his own caravan, all was at length ready for the cruel combat; the lion himself seeming to be the only creature unconscious of what was about to take place. The spectators, both above and below, had their eyes riveted on the iron cage. There couched Nero, king of the brute creation; there, near the cage, waited the inhuman handlers of the dogs; and there stood, licking their black lips and struggling to be let loose, the mastiff bull-dogs—

Thirsting for blood, and eager to engage  
The forest monarch in his royal rage.

Captain, Tiger, and Turk were first slipped at the lion, who by some was expected to seize and shake and tear them, as a terrier dog does a rat which he has caught on a barn floor; but it was not so; for Nero permitted all the dogs to seize him: indeed he seemed not to understand how to protect himself from his tormentors, that bit, and mauled, and pulled at him at their pleasure. Had he been a lamb, instead of a lion, hardly could he have acted a tamer part. After a time he shook off the dogs at once; but even then he attempted not to hurt them, but kept flying about the cage endeavouring to make his escape.

It was a miserable, degrading, and disgusting sight to see the dogs hanging to the lips of the agonized animal, seizing him by the under jaw, and pinning him by the nose; the lion roaring with pain, but not enraged. Several times he tore off the dogs with his claws, but never once used his formidable teeth. Captain, the fallow-coloured dog, was at last taken away, lamed and much distressed; and Tiger and Turk continued the fight. Tiger next crawled out of the cage dreadfully maimed, leaving Turk alone. This dog, the lightest of the three, though wounded and bleeding from all parts of his body, still contended with the lion, which was twenty times his weight, pinning him by the nose at least half a dozen times over. When Turk was withdrawn from the cage, mangled and bleeding, he seemed more dead than alive.

During the twenty minutes' respite that followed, poor Nero, after being sliced with a pail of water by Wombwell, (who at once went into his cage,) rubbed his wounded head with his paws like

a cat. He then lapped for some time from a fresh pan of water, and was patted and caressed by a keeper through the bars of his cage. The savage throng being now impatient for a renewal of the combat, three fresh dogs, larger than the others—Nettle, Rose, and Nelson—were let loose.

The cage had been rendered slippery by the water thrown down, so that the poor lion, partly exhausted, could not keep his feet when attacked by the fresh dogs. They fastened upon him at once, while he as before only tried to get away from them. When the dogs were taken away, the throng cried out for them to be brought again to the fight, as they were not beaten. The dogs were again brought forward, and the same heart-sickening scenes of cruelty prevailed. At length the strife was ended; the dogs, wounded and maimed, and the lion torn and bleeding, were separated. The first fight lasted eleven minutes, and the last five. And this, by the merciless assembly, was called "sport" and "pastime." Well might the question have been put, amid the confusion of men and animals that prevailed—

The yelling throng, the grappling dogs,  
And lion's thrilling roar—  
Which of them are the real brutes,  
The two-legged, or the four?

In spite of the disgust and indignation called forth in the public mind by this inhuman spectacle, during the same week in which it occurred a second lion fight was announced by Wombwell, who seemed bent on acquiring a lasting reputation for inhumanity. He matched his lion Wallace, cubbed in Scotland, against six of the best dogs that could be found. Wallace, who had much of the ferocity of a forest lion, was put into the same cage in which Nero had been so cruelly baited. Spectators were admitted to the Old Factory yard at five shillings a head, and several well-dressed women viewed the contest from the factory windows. Three couples of dogs were slipped at Wallace—Tinker, Ball, Billy, Sweep, Turpin, and Tiger—one couple at a time; but Wallace made quick work of them; he clapped his paw upon Ball, took Tinker in his teeth, walking about with him like a cat with a mouse. Turpin and Sweep were treated much in the same manner, and Tiger and Billy had no better success. Turpin ran away; Sweep was half killed; Tiger made his escape just in time; and Billy, said to be the best dog in England, was wounded in the head and bitten across the loins. If in the former bait the dogs had the better of the lion, in the latter the lion had the mastery over the dogs. Both baits, however, were equally discreditable, and ought to call forth the most unsparing reprobation.

Such a general disgust was manifested against these lion fights, at the time of their occurrence, that there is but little likelihood of their being again repeated; yet still an occasional looking back to scenes of unusual cruelty and depravity, may have a salutary effect in keeping up among us a healthy kindness towards the brute creation. With all the advantages of civilization, and the mercy-loving influences of Christianity, cruelty ought to be banished as one of the guilty blunders of a bygone age, and the Great Lion Fight should only be remembered as a great scandal to humanity.

### THE WORKING MAN IN THE OLDEN TIME.

#### V.—SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION.

On the 2nd of September last, an event impressive in its character, and illustrative of the spirit of our times, took place in Manchester. A large and influential meeting inaugurated the opening of the Free Library in that town. It contains 16,013 well-selected volumes. Nearly one-tenth of the sum of 10,000*l.* expended on this undertaking, has, it appears, been subscribed by the working men; the institution, to a large extent, being intended for the gratuitous use of that class. The Prince Consort sent a handsome collection of books. The bishop of the diocese and ministers of all denominations were present at the opening, and wished the undertaking hearty success. Members of parliament, distinguished writers, and other influential leaders of society, were also there, cordially hailing the new movement for the moral and intellectual elevation of the lower classes.

What a change between all this and the working man of the olden time. During the middle ages, education was almost entirely in the hands of the church. Libraries were only found in monasteries; and although many of the monks were learned in bookish lore, and testified their love of literature by the activity with which they multiplied manuscripts, and the commerce which they maintained among themselves in the buying, lending and exchanging books, yet there were but few among them who had much sense of their intellectual stewardship. They did not look upon their learning as a talent with which Providence had intrusted them, and which it was their duty to employ for the advancement of His glory, and the benefit of their fellow-men. We cannot award to them the merit of instructing the people; they appear rather to have discouraged the dawning and struggles of humble genius. The schools which were attached to the monasteries were not established for the laity, but for the discipline and education of those designed for the church. In France, Charlemagne was the first who founded schools for lay-students; and we are told that, previous to this, no means of education as regards the laity existed in his dominions. In our own country, Alfred the Great was the first who established schools for secular instruction. He is said to have founded the university of Oxford, where grammar, philosophy, and divinity were taught to the sons of the wealthy; and, to enforce his plan, he made a law obliging all freemen who possessed two hides of land, or upwards, to send their sons to school. The learning imparted in these schools was not great; in a letter upon the subject, addressed by the emperor Charlemagne to the clergy, he recommends that the boys be taught the psalms, the chants, the calendar, and grammar. The church discountenanced a more liberal education towards the laity. Pope Gregory, writing to Desiderius, bishop of Gau, says: "I was informed (which I cannot repeat without shame) that you teach grammar; at this I was so grieved that I groaned for sadness;"\* and Peter Abelard tell us that it was a common opinion in his day, that it was unlaw-

ful to read secular books.\* After the death of Charlemagne and Alfred, learning declined, and for a long period the laity enjoyed but few of the privileges of education. The sciences as taught in the cathedral and monastic schools were few and imperfect. The *trivium*, and *quadrivium*, a course of seven sciences, embracing grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy, were expounded from the meagre treatises of obscure writers, and fell far short of the sense which we are now apt to attach to these names. A few definitions and axioms were all they knew of geometry. Their grammar was crude and inaccurate, and their arithmetic was mingled with the most ridiculous absurdities upon the fancied properties of numbers. Alcuin, the most learned man of the ninth century, imagined he could expound all the mysteries of the scriptures by the aid of arithmetic.

Science, as taught in England, was but a tissue of fable. Some old manuscripts in the British Museum curiously illustrate the learning of the Saxon schools.† One informs the reader, that there is an island in the Red Sea, which contains red hens of such a nature that if any man touches them his hands and body are burnt immediately. The student is told, that pepper is guarded by serpents, which are driven away by fire, which causes the pepper to be black. Mention is made, with the utmost confidence, of men with dogs' heads, boars' tusks, horses' manes, and with flames pouring out of their mouths like living fire. Ants are represented as big as dogs, with the feet of grasshoppers. These singular beings would have been favourites in these money-making days, for they were said to have the faculty of finding gold. Men, we are told, went with camels and their young to fetch it, and the ants allowed them to take the gold on condition that they had the privilege of eating the young camels. These books are full of curiosities. We read of giants, fifteen feet high, with two faces; of a race of men without heads, but with mouth and eyes in their breasts. The sun is described as a burning stone, and as being red at night because it is then over the flames of hell. Such were a few of the absurdities gravely taught in the schools of monastic England in those "good old times" of our forefathers!

Books of science, designed for the instruction of the laity in the Anglo-Norman schools, were not much superior. The same fallacies were taught as truths, and a superstitious wonder was generated instead of wisdom. In the *Livre des Creatures* and the *Bestiary* of Philippe de Thaun—works written expressly for the instruction of Adelaide of Louvaine, queen of Henry I—we have ample proof of the low state of science among our Norman ancestors. The fable of the gold-collecting ants is still retained. In *Ethiopia*, we are told, there are some who make a trade by obtaining this gold. The bite of the ant is death, and no one dares approach it; and it is only by a stratagem that the gold can be obtained. A number of mares are turned into the fields, with baskets tied to their backs; the ants make their nests in the baskets, and so load the mares with the precious fruits of their industry. The mares

\* Theol. Christ. lib. ii. Martine v. p. 1238.

† In Cottonian Collection, marked Julius, a. 2 and E. 7. Tib. B. 5, and several others.

are then enticed out of the field. "Thus truly," says de Thaun, "do the people get gold!"

But these faults are venial when compared with the religious falsehoods with which the educational books of the middle ages were crowded. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, all the worst doctrines of the papal system were mingled with the treatises then in use, and they are usually enforced by descriptions of the most awful punishments consequent upon their rejection. Stories of demons and hobgoblins were taught to infant scholars, and the whole tendency of the educational literature of the middle ages was to debase the human mind, and to bind it with the strong cords of superstition and fear.

But although the universities may have afforded the wealthy some means of obtaining education, the working classes had no such opportunities. Schools for the people were never attempted to be established previous to the age of Wickliffe, and then only secretly, and in opposition to the wishes of the church. Monks had no desire to set the national mind at work. They knew that their power was derived from their knowledge, and was tolerated only by the ignorance of the people. Proud of their learning, they made a point of treating laymen with contempt. Albertus Magnus, commenting upon *Isaiah i. 3*—"The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib"—says the ox is the priest; and the ass is the layman, who ought to carry all burdens. It was a common joke, in the middle ages, to call the laity asses or swine. They were thought by monks quite unworthy of enjoying the privileges of learning. When Wickliffe translated the Bible, and the people began to read it, a wrathful churchman declared that the gospel was by that means made vulgar, and trodden under the feet of swine.\* A French poet of the thirteenth century repudiates the idea of giving learning to the villans, or working men, and he asserts that he committed a sin who made the villan learned. It was a proverb current in that age, "that he put a disgrace upon God who rose a villan above his station."

Il fait a dieu haute,  
Qui villain haute monte.†

So entirely was learning withheld from the industrious classes, that even those who had acquired property were not allowed to participate in the advantages afforded by collegiate education. A layman was not admitted as a scholar into the universities unless he was a freeman. As late as the reign of Henry VI no villan could enter Eton College. The poor bondsman was also excluded from the monastic schools. No serf could be made a monk, unless he was first manumitted by charter. According to a law of Henry I, no villan could enter holy orders. Indeed, every effort was made to keep the people in the dark shadows of ignorance. Richard de Bury, bishop of Durham, writing in the fourteenth century, says, that "laymen, to whom it matters not whether they look at a book turned wrong side upwards or spread before them in its natural order, are totally unworthy of any communion with books." Wickliffe first

generated among the people a desire for knowledge, and the Lollards founded little schools, in which the peasant and the mechanic were taught to read. This was the sowing of seed that never died, but which eventually grew up and flourished, in spite of the vigorous efforts of the papal church to root it out. The severe measures against the Lollards, enacted in the reign of Henry IV, were grounded on the charge of their having "held and exercised schools, made and written books, and wickedly informed and instructed the people;" and it was therefore decreed, that henceforth none should dare to hold or exercise schools, or make or write books, on pain of penalties or death.\* Matters are somewhat changed, and we have learnt a better policy—as witness the Manchester library aforesaid—than that of these mediæval times, and no longer regard it "wicked" to inform and instruct the people. Under the pretence of heresy, the Lollards were not only prohibited from attending or holding schools, but were deprived of all books for their edification at home. It was enacted, that any persons having English books in their possession were to deliver them up within forty days on pain of imprisonment. In the year 1429, Richard Fletcher was brought before the Bishop of Norwich, on the charge of having an English book in his possession. Many were arraigned for reading such books. Archbishop Arundel, in his canons against the Lollards, forbade the translation of any book into the English tongue. Reading the words of that old popish statute, and remembering the degrading condition of the working classes in those days, we cannot but contrast in our minds the intellectual barrenness of the past with the abundant fertility of the present. Men have learnt that wisdom is a good thing; it entereth into their hearts, and knowledge is pleasant unto their souls. We now read the words of Archbishop Arundel with a sigh of sympathy for those "who kept the faith so pure of old;" but yet withhold with a smile, as we think of the astonishment and ire of his Grace, could he but peep into the homes of the English people of the nineteenth century, or look into the Manchester library and view its goodly shelves of English books.

The monks were always bitter enemies to popular instruction, and they earnestly joined with the papal church in suppressing any signs of a growing love of knowledge among the people. Education was inimical to their interests. They wrote only in the Latin language. Knowledge, they affirmed, was not for working men, but for priests and monks. They regarded literature as their own peculiar province, and they waged war against all "unclerky" laymen who ventured to invade their self-appropriated territories. Many anecdotes are related, in old chronicles, of the zeal with which the monks endeavoured to keep the more humble classes in a state of ignorance. John of Amersham tells us, that John, abbot of St. Alban's, although a man of much learning and skill, used harsh and rigorous measures towards those heretical persons who dared to possess any books written in the common language of the people. On one occasion, a report reached his ear that several in his neighbour-

\* Knighton de Eventibus Angliae, col. 2644.

† Le Roux de Lincy, Livres des Proverbes, vol. ii. p. 82.

\* 2 Henry IV, c. xv. By a subsequent act, however, the people were allowed to send their children to school.

hood had been seduced into the wicked habit of reading English books. The indignation of my lord abbot was aroused at this open presumption of his vassals, and three persons were arrested and accused before him of this *crime*. Two of them managed to evade the charge; but the third, named William Redhead, a maltster of Barnet, confessed that he had a book written in the vernacular tongue, which he had often read himself, and had endeavoured to teach others to read too. As a punishment for this grave offence he was sentenced to the following penance. Once every year, for seven years, he was to visit the martyr's tomb, and approach the same barefooted. He was to bring and place upon the altar a wax candle of one pound weight, and for three days after each visit he was to walk round the churchyard stripped of his garments. In addition to this public degradation, he was to carry the book which he had in his possession to the church, and there with fagots burn the same to ashes. Our author does not say what was the nature of the book which thus excited the wrath of abbot John; probably it was one of Wycliffe's bibles, or some religious work, which the honest maltster had endeavoured to expound to the villagers of Barnet.

With this strong anti-educational movement at work, we cannot be surprised at the general ignorance of the working classes. Unused, the national mind dwindled into puerility. It is a law of nature that everything gains strength by legitimate use. Exertion gives vigour to the intellect. Idleness induces weakness. Any stimulant to the mind, whether of a religious or secular nature, may arouse a sleeping brain. The subtle genius of Rome understood this fact, and guarded against it by condemning all inquiry or research among the laity. Ignorance held mighty sway. During the long period of the dark ages, few laymen could read or write. Previous to the eleventh century, even persons of rank and wealth were often ignorant of the simplest rudiments of learning. Florence of Worcester tells us, that king Alfred was unacquainted with the alphabet until after his twelfth year. The emperor Frederic Barbarossa could not read.\* John, duke of Bohemia, in the middle of the fourteenth century, was equally ignorant;† and Philip the Hardy, king of France and son of the famous St. Louis, scarcely knew the letters of the alphabet.‡ Writing was a still rarer accomplishment; it was a language of hieroglyphics to the great mass of the people. The emperor Theodore could not write, and he used to subscribe his edicts by the aid of a piece of gold, in which were cut the first five letters of his name. Withred, king of Kent, at the end of a charter, says, "I have put the sign of the cross on account of my ignorance of writing."§ Charlemagne was advanced in life before he knew how to use his pen. Tassilo, duke of Bavaria, signed a deed with a cross because he could not write his name. Heriband, count of Palestine, in 873, was unable to sign a charter; and Gui Guerra, count of Tuscany, was equally illiterate. The majority of the proud nobility of England were totally ignorant of the first rudiments

of calligraphic art. Pride found an excuse for their ignorance, and it was deemed fashionable to look upon penmanship as a professional employment. It became the recognised trade of a small class of notaries; a clerk could be hired for a penny a day, and the noble pretended to pride himself upon his ignorance of so servile a calling. To supply this want of education the baron kept his chaplain, who officiated as his clerk; and his epistles, whether relating to domestic affairs or to a lawsuit, were alike penned by his retainer. Custom had decreed that all letters should be written in Latin, and it was the duty of the clerk to transpose into the language of Virgil the homely communications of the Norman baron. The rich never dictated an epistle in the vernacular tongue, so that "if a Northumbrian baron," says Sir Francis Palgrave, "wished to inform his spouse in Yorkshire of his joys or his sorrows, his weal or his woe, the message, noted down from Romance into Latin by the chaplain of the knight, was read from Latin into Romance by the chaplain of the lady; both the principals being ignorant of the language in which their anxieties and sentiments were clothed and concealed."\* During the middle ages there was no letter writing among the labouring classes. The towns had no epistolary intercourse with distant villages; friends could not interchange their messages of love. Months might elapse before a son, away from home, heard the sad tidings of a parent's death. Even had they been capable of writing, there were no ready means of transmission. The pedlars and the pilgrims were the only letter carriers of the age, and the correspondence of friends and lovers were alike subjected to the vicissitudes incurred in their transmission in a pedlar's wallet, or the fidelity of the message depended upon the memory of the strolling pilgrim. This ignorance of writing, and the inconveniences resulting from it, continued till the Reformation.

#### CURIOSITIES OF LONDON LIFE.

##### THE STREET STATIONER.

THE profession of street stationer is one of comparative novelty, and which cannot be traced so far back as the advent of Rowland Hill with his famous system of penny postage, which has proved such a bonus to the nation, and has already gone far to add another generic designation to the *genus homo*, who being once described as a cooking animal, may now with nearly equal propriety be styled a "corresponding" one. It was the increase of correspondence, consequent upon the establishment and success of the penny postage, and no other cause, that called the street stationer into existence, and located him with his back to the carriage-way and his feet to the kerb-stone, and set him chanting, in a monotonous voice, "Here you are, ladies and gen'l'men—best Bath note-paper a penny for a 'ole half quire—hangflups three-halfpence a packet, an' sealin'-vax a penny a stick."

This out-of-door trader is generally a shabby and rather broken-down specimen of the low-class man-about-town, who has lingered and idled and dawdled and hesitated so long in the choice of a

\* Struvius, Hist. German. tom. i. p. 377.

† Simondi, tom. v. p. 205.

‡ Hallam's Mid. Ages, vol. ii. p. 352.

§ Astle's Charters, No. 1.

profession, that it is at length too late to make his selection. He has been driven to exertion to satisfy the wants of nature, and being constitutionally averse, as well to the discipline as the toil of regular labour, he has contrived to invest a small capital in a species of property conveniently portable, and thrown himself upon the patronage of the public, to whose epistolary wants he dedicates his compelled energies. This is all very well so far as it goes ; and we might congratulate him, and the community he assumes to serve, upon his having at length condescended to get his own living in any lawful way, were it not for the fact, that the species of industry he has adopted is palpably open to the charge of deception and predacity. It happens to be the case that, owing to some cause or other very intimately connected with the subject of popular education, not one in twenty of that class of the London industrials who, when they correspond at all, may be said to correspond from hand to mouth, and who only purchase stationery when they want to write a letter, know how many sheets of paper go to a quire. Of this state of ignorance the street stationer often takes a professional advantage, and sells his confiding customers eight sheets instead of twelve, under the denomination of "a 'ole half quire." As he himself gives eight-pence for five quires, to sell at a penny the half quire would yield him a profit less remunerative than he would relish, and one which perhaps he would consider not worth the trouble attending the sale : so he divides his quire, as the Irishman divides his cheese, into *three* halves, and thus realizes a profit of nearly ninety per cent., three-fourths of which is due to the ignorance of his patrons. His "hangflups," as he calls his envelopes, are subjected to a similar process of expansion, though they are not susceptible, by any species of management, of such a profitable transformation as that effected by bisecting a quire of paper in the mode above described. Of these, however, he makes five quarters to the hundred, which after all pays handsomely for the trouble of the division.

Unlike other street traders, who carry a portable stock, and wander where they choose at their own sweet will, the stationer of the flag-stones finds it as much to his convenience as to his interest to confine himself to one locality. Stationery, which derives its designation from being sold by persons who occupied stations, in contradistinction to travelling hawkers and pedlars—and which was originally and properly spelled stationery — would appear to be a species of merchandise the sale of which naturally attracts and cultivates a connection; and hence it follows that the longer a man remains in one place, where the public know where to find him, the more he sells, and the more he is likely to sell. This, of course, is one reason why the subject of the present sketch is found in full voice—though not in full quire—from week to week, and from month to month, chanting his delusive notes in the self-same spot. Another reason, and one which must have considerable weight in determining his choice of a position, will be found in the damageable nature of the commodities in which he deals. He cannot afford to be caught in a heavy shower : water would be almost as fatal as ink to the delicate gloss of his note-paper ; and his "hangflups," which wear a very livid appearance,

and are but sickly to look at, would dissolve into pulp under the pressure of the hydropathic treatment, in the shape of a summer storm. Hence he takes up his stand within a very short distance of some convenient shelter, to which he can repair when a lowering cloud threatens to moisten his merchandise. Whenever you see him harnessed with his little tray, fluttering his pretended half-quire in the faces of the passers-by, and hear him patterning his never-ending strain in their ears, you may be sure that not far off, in some direction or other, there is a dry archway, a covered court, or some roomy shelter, where, in company with the umbrellaless crowd, he can take his stand in less than a minute, should it come on to rain ; and where, too, he has an opportunity of prosecuting his commerce among a large party whom the shower has brought into temporary companionship.

It is but fair to state that some of the members of this fraternity approximate rather nearer than the majority of them do to a just conception of what is due to the purchaser of a half-quire of paper, and give him *nine* sheets for his penny. This is a step in the right direction ; and we are sorry that at present we can report no further improvement, and that even this small instalment of justice is but partially practised. We made the experiment of buying at two or three locations very lately, and in no case obtained more than nine sheets for the price of twelve. Now here is a chance for some enterprising genius, if such a character is to be found among all the street stationers, to stand forth manfully in the cause of honesty, and to earn a character by dispelling the popular hallucination on the subject of a quire of paper, in awarding his customers the right number of sheets for their money. We venture to predict that the first man among them who shall do this will find his account in it, and realize, through "small profits and quick returns," a larger weekly income than he has averaged hitherto by defrauding his patrons to the tune of thirty per cent. We promise him moreover that, clever as it may be thought to trick the multitude, and sweet as stolen waters are, he shall find that the practice of integrity is a policy incomparably more profitable, and the crust purchased by an honest penny infinitely more sweet and wholesome.

#### A WALK THROUGH NEWGATE.

A VISIT to the prison of Newgate must naturally cause, in any thinking mind, mingled sensations of awe, regret, and sympathy. When a person first stands within those gloomy portals, and hears the massive gate through which he has just entered closed behind him, and surveys the immensely thick and solid walls, an indescribable feeling of awe steals over him ; and he cannot help fancying that he is shut out from the world to become an inhabitant, for the time, of that sad abode of crime and misery, in which is incarcerated a great number of our fellow-creatures who will only issue therefrom when the dread sentence of the law shall have been passed upon them—some being condemned to banishment, and possibly one or more to death !

These feelings were experienced by us on a

recent visit to that establishment; and we now purpose to repeat our visit in imagination, and beg the reader to accompany us in our gloomy but instructive journey. We arrive at the outer gate and ring the bell, which to our mind seems to emit a sound quite in harmony with the sombre look of the building. We present our credentials, and are most politely received by the proper officer, who hands us over to the charge of a matron to accompany us through the female portion of the prison. We pass several gates, all of immense strength—and which are all carefully locked after we have gone through them—and arrive at a large paved yard, intended for the purpose of allowing the prisoners to take necessary exercise. Here one female, respectably attired, with a veil thrown over her head, is, with lingering pace and downcast eyes, taking her lonely and limited walk. How widely different to the life this woman had been in the habit of leading! What a vast difference between the society she is now condemned to keep and that in which she used to mix! Where are now the companions and friends who were wont, in the time of her freedom and prosperity, to press her hand, and with a friendly smile bid her welcome to their homes? All departed; and she left for two years to herd with felons in the gaol of Newgate! As we passed, our conductor said, in a whisper, "That is Mrs. Sloane!" This, also, is the place allotted to interviews between prisoners and their friends—the prisoners standing in a sort of cage, and separated from their visitors by a partition of iron network, in order to prevent anything being passed from the one to the other. After a caution, "not to make any remarks about the prisoners in their presence," we proceed into the wards, and here we cannot help remarking the great care evinced in keeping every place scrupulously clean; the walls appear as white as they can possibly be, whilst the tables and oaken floors seem as though they were used for no other purpose than being constantly scrubbed. The walls, our conductor informed us, are whitewashed once a year. But we will leave this part of the prison and proceed to the male portion.

We now come to several paved yards, all for the purpose of exercise, and round which some prisoners are walking, "rank and file;" we cross one of these, and arrive at a range of cells, which, as we are informed by the officer who accompanies us, are the old condemned cells used in the time of George III, for criminals destined to undergo the extreme penalty of the law, and which, as is well known, were fully occupied in those days.

"How are they now tenanted?" we inquired.

"By prisoners who prefer being confined alone," we are told. We shudder at the idea of being locked up alone in such a dismal place, and pass on again into the open air. A young man is pacing the yard to and fro in communion with his own thoughts; the crime of which he has been convicted being an attempt to stab one of the jailors at the Millbank Penitentiary. This yard, of which he is allowed to be the sole occupant, is surrounded by walls whose dizzy height would seem sufficient to deter any human being from attempting to escape; yet we are told that a chimney-sweeper had scaled them and effected his escape.

We proceed through the wards, and observe the

same cleanliness as on the female side; the beds, or resting-places—for beds there are none—consist of a mat for the prisoner to lie upon, and a rug to cover him. We enter a large room, in which about a dozen prisoners are employed picking oakum, all seated round a comfortable fire. Our conductor, remarking that one of them is sitting on a basket appropriated for the picked oakum, remonstrates with him about it.

"I am doing no harm," says the man.

"I'll tell you what it is," replies the jailor, "you will go on until I order the fire to be put out."

This threat—the weather being rather severe—seems to act as a salutary caution.

"But what are these boys doing here?" we exclaim, as we enter a ward in which about a dozen lads, the eldest being about 14 years old, are engaged in reading, or are being instructed.

"They are all under sentence of transportation," we are told.

"Surely such a sentence has not been pronounced on that youngest lad—who, we think, cannot be more than 10 or 12 years of age"—we reply.

"That lad has been here five or six times for different offences, besides being as many times summarily convicted," rejoins the jailor.

"This," says the guide, as we enter a comfortable room in which is a good fire, "is the room in which prisoners are placed who are under sentence of death." We are agreeably disappointed. Our imagination has always pictured to us a dismal cell, about eight feet square, lighted by a single window, and with all the means and appliances for heavily chaining the criminal: in the place of which it is a large apartment, well warmed and lighted; a table is in the centre, on which is placed a copy of the "Book of books." We follow our conductor, from this room of gloomy reminiscences, through a little passage into the kitchen, and our attention is called to a large dismal-looking door, being the portal through which many have passed, in the prime of life, only to be brought back after their souls had passed into the presence of their Maker. In this room is cooked and allotted to each prisoner his daily allowance of food, which is of a good description and ample in quantity.

One other department claims our attention, and that is the chapel; and as we stand in this place, devoted to the service of the Judge of judges, a strange feeling comes over us as we think of the singular congregation to which the preacher has to expound the sacred truths. Criminals of every grade, some sentenced to transportation, and perhaps one—for happily there are seldom more, at any one time, in the present day—to death. It would be curious, if it were possible, to trace the effect of the sacred word on the consciences of the hearers: some, doubtless, jeering at it; others receiving in their hearts the good seed, and in due time, we trust, bringing forth the desired fruit. We looked in vain for what we had always imagined was to be seen in this place, namely, a pew set apart for a felon under sentence of death. No such thing is there; a chair on one side of the chapel being the seat allotted to a criminal under the above awful sentence.

As we are leaving Newgate, our attention is called to number of casts of heads. These are the casts of the features of every criminal who has

expiated his crime on the scaffold outside this prison for many years past. A chill runs through our veins as we observe the mark of the rope round the neck of each.

"Are the casts taken long after death?" we inquire.

"After the body is cut down, it is taken back to the cell from which it was brought an hour ago alive: the head is shaved, and the cast taken immediately," replies our conductor.

We have now passed through the principal parts of this celebrated prison, and our walk, we trust, has not proved uninstructive. We must, however, quit the place; and, as we once more breathe the free air of Heaven, we express a fervent hope that the hearts of those who are condemned to undergo banishment may, in another land, be turned from their evil ways, so that the punishment which they undergo may benefit their future life; and, what is of far more importance, lead them to repentance and faith in Christ, so as to enable them to appear at the tribunal of the Judge of all men whenever they may be called upon to do so.

#### OUR FRIEND—THE POTATO.

At a time when fears are again being expressed as to an extensive failure of the potato-crop, a few words about the history of this useful esculent may possess a more than ordinary interest.

In the year 1584, the celebrated voyager and courtier Sir Walter Raleigh stood in high favour with the "virgin queen;" and, ever ambitious to extend his power and wealth, sought for and obtained from his royal mistress a patent for "discovering and planting new countries not possessed by Christians." This document gave him power to appropriate, plant, and govern the territories he might acquire. Nor was he slow in availing himself of the privileges thus bestowed on him. Undismayed by the failure of a previous personal attempt, and by an abortive expedition in the preceding year, in which he had adventured 2000*l.*, he organized a body of colonists, who sailed for the shores of America in 1585, under the government of a Mr. Lane. They landed on the eastern shore of that continent, near Chesapeake-bay, and named the colony Virginia, in honour of the queen. Instead, however, of adopting Penn's policy, and seeking by honest and fair means to obtain a permanent footing in the country, the misconduct and aggressions of the colonists soon plunged them into hostilities with the Indians, and in less than a year they were glad to make their escape and abandon their colony. They re-embarked on board Sir Francis Drake's squadron, which visited the coast on its homeward voyage. Futile and void of any useful aid as the expedition seemed, it nevertheless resulted in the introduction into England of two plants which have exerted a very important influence on after ages. The governor, Mr. Lane, brought home for the first time tobacco, which he had seen used by the natives; and Sir Walter Raleigh introduced smoking into this country. One of the colonists, named Thomas Heriot, wrote an account of the country, in which he describes a plant called "*openawk*." He says, "The roots of this plant are round, some

as large as a walnut, others much larger: they grow in damp soils, many hanging together as if fixed on ropes. They are good food, either boiled or roasted." This was the root now so well known as the potato: and however we may incline to doubt whether the introduction of tobacco has been a benefit to this part of the globe—for the universality of the custom of smoking is no proof of its utility—there can be but one opinion as to the vastness of the benefit conferred by the naturalization of the potato amongst us. So universal has the use of this root become, that we are apt to look upon it as a common thing, and to think slightly of its immense importance. We shall, perhaps, be able to estimate its value more rightly, if we compare the condition of our ancestors *without* it, with that of our countrymen of the present day *with* it. But more of this anon.

The potato, as well as the tobacco plant, was brought home on the return of this expedition, and was first cultivated by Sir W. Raleigh at Youghall, in the county of Cork. An amusing anecdote is related of its early history there. Sir Walter's gardener had with care planted the roots he had received from his master, and had diligently tended them till they had flowered, and the flowers had given way to the round green berries—the "potato apples," as they are called. Ignorant that the value of the plant lay in its tuberous roots, and not in its berries, he brought one of the "apples" to his master, and asked if *that* were the fine new American fruit? The knight, having examined it, either was or pretended to be so dissatisfied, that he ordered the "weed" to be rooted out. The gardener obeyed, and in rooting out the "weeds" found a bushel of potatoes.

The cultivation of the potato very gradually spread in Ireland; but nearly a century had elapsed before it could be said to form an important portion of the means of sustenance to the inhabitants of that country. In England it met with much less favour; for it was considerably more than a century before it came into anything like general cultivation, and in many parts, so lately as 1770, it was rare to meet with a whole acre of potatoes. Lancashire seems to have been the first scene of potato culture in England, where the mechanics and cottagers found it a valuable addition to their means of subsistence, from the ease with which it could be grown, and the abundant nature of its produce. By some it was at first esteemed a delicacy. The old botanist Gerarde cultivated it in his garden, and gave a drawing of it in his well-known "Herbal" under the name of the "Potato of Virginia:" he recommends that the root should be eaten as a delicate dish. In the reign of James I., we are told that potatoes formed one of the articles provided for the household of the queen, and that their price was 2*s.* per pound. But all the efforts of Raleigh, and even the patronage of Queen Anne, were not sufficient to push the potato into favour, although the philosophers of the day gave it their recommendation. A committee of the Royal Society was appointed to inquire into its merits; all those Fellows of the Society who had suitable lands were entreated to plant them with it. But it was of no avail: the root had long to contend with many and popular prejudices, as too many a useful invention or discovery has had to do. One author,

(Mortimer,) writing in 1708, sneeringly says, that "the root is very near the nature of the Jerusalem artichoke, although not so good and wholesome; but that it may prove good for swine." Woolridge, three years later, says: "I do not hear whether it has yet been essayed whether they may not be propagated in great quantities for the use of swine and other cattle." Another writer speaks of them only as being good "for poor people." A still more strange prejudice against them was prevalent amongst the Scotch, on the ground that "potatoes are not mentioned in the Bible;" and they were therefore regarded as unhallowed food. It is not therefore wonderful that, with the rude modes of cultivation prevalent in those days, the potato was long in making head against the prejudices with which it had to contend, and taking its position as the universally useful and agreeable esculent it now forms.

Nor was the proper way of cooking it better understood. When the first potatoes which had been raised in the county of Forfar were cooked and served up, they adhered to the teeth like glue, and were far from agreeable; and the poor potato would have been condemned through the ignorance of the cook, but for the opportune arrival of a gentleman who had tasted a potato in Lancashire. At his recommendation, the half-cooked vegetables were remanded back to the hot turf-ashes, till they became as pleasant as they had before been nauseous. This was in 1730, two years after it had been fairly introduced into cultivation in Scotland. The mode of its first introduction is interesting, as showing how the absence of prejudice, and the earnest, persevering attempt by trial to ascertain its real value, soon raised the despised potato to deserved esteem. It was a poor cottager, a day-labourer, living near Kilsyth in Stirlingshire, named Thomas Prentice, who maintained himself in part by the produce of a little plot of ground, who first successfully attempted the cultivation of the potato in Scotland. Having by some means obtained a few roots, he planted them in his little field, and tended them so carefully and judiciously that the produce was very valuable, being almost instantly in demand among the neighbouring cottagers and farmers, who saw its use in propagating other crops. Prentice continued thus to supply his neighbours, till in a few years he had saved 200/-—no small fortune to such a man. He afterwards invested his capital in an annuity, on which he lived comfortably to the age of 86, having witnessed the general adoption of his favourite root, and the blessings it had conferred on his country. The year 1742, which was long remembered in Scotland as "the dear year," was however mainly instrumental in promoting its universal cultivation. Old people, who were living at the beginning of the present century, represented the state of things in the summer of 1743 as truly dreadful. Many of the destitute wandered in the fields, seeking to prolong the misery of existence by devouring the leaves of peas, beans, sorrel, and other plants; while many perished of absolute starvation, and others were swept away by the fevers, and those diseases which always follow in the track of famine. This general state of distress drew the attention of most people to the potato, and its great value as a sub-

stantial article of food became so apparent, that its cultivation soon became general both in garden and field. The urgent necessities of a superabundant and wretchedly destitute peasantry in Ireland, and the famine in Scotland, promoted the rapid growth of potato-culture in those countries to a much greater extent than in England, where the absence of any such powerful stimulus retarded its progress. Towards the latter end of the last century, however, the prejudices which had at first been excited against it had in great measure subsided, and its value was in consequence more truly appreciated: it began now to form an important part of English husbandry; and, in 1776, no fewer than 1700 acres in Essex were planted with potatoes, for the supply of the London market.

Its history on the continent has been almost a facsimile of its progress in our own country. Similar prejudices were excited against it there; and to such an extent did they prevail, that, in Pomerania, Frederick the Great compelled the unwilling inhabitants to receive it by force of law. In Sweden, the celebrated Linnaeus plied his efforts and recommendations to the same end, but to little purpose, till, in 1764, a royal edict was issued for the encouragement of its culture. In Switzerland, it appears to have met with less opposition, and the Swiss peasants grew potatoes on their mountain sides in abundance, and learnt the art of drying them and grinding them into flour, and making them into bread. A peasant bought a small field near the Alps, and in two years paid the purchase-money by the profits of its potato-crops. The root is now as extensively cultivated in many parts of the continent as in England. It has also been introduced into India; and though there at first the subject of violent dislike, it seems to be coming into great favour with the natives. In fact, its culture is fast becoming universal.

It is a singular fact, that the potato belongs to a natural order in the vegetable kingdom remarkable for its acrid and poisonous properties—the order to which the deadly nightshade, henbane, capsicum, mandrake, thorn-apple, and tobacco belong. It seems strange to find so valuable an article of food among such suspicious companions; and it seems equally strange, that the only species of the potato genus (*solanum*) which inhabit England are both of poisonous nature: they are the common nightshade (*solanum nigrum*) and the bitter-sweet (*solanum dulcamara*). Both are common plants. The potato (*solanum tuberosum*) appears to have been originally a native of the western coast of South America, where it grows wild from 34° south latitude to at least 10° or 20° north latitude; that is, through the subtropical, tropical, and equinoctial zones. It is usually found on cliffs, hills, and mountains near the sea; and is most abundant near Valparaiso, Mendoza, Quito, Lima, and Santa Fé de Bogota. In its wild state the flowers are always pure white, not purple-tinted as in its cultivated state with us. It is needless to describe a plant so universally well known, or to enter into details as to the manner of its cultivation. It may surprise many, however, to be told that the tuber of the potato, which forms so valuable an article of food, is not a root, but an underground stem: and that this is no mere scientific refinement will be evident to any one who will

carefully take up a potato plant and examine it. The long, fibrous, real roots will then be readily recognised; while the tubers which grow from them will be seen to be sprinkled with buds, or "eyes," as they are commonly termed. Now buds are never found upon real roots, and their presence is so characteristic of the stem, that even though it is growing underground, as in this instance, its real nature is at once shown by them.

The potato, like some other highly-cultivated plants, is subject to peculiar diseases. One of them is the *curl*. When attacked by this disease, the plant ceases to grow, and becomes of a sickly appearance just at the time when the tubers should form; so that the produce, if any, is small and of bad quality. This disease first made its appearance in Lancashire in 1764, and rapidly spread over the potato districts of Britain, exciting general fears that the plant would be exterminated. Many theories were framed to account for it, and many remedies advised; but all in vain, till at length it was found that it arose from planting, as seed potatoes, tubers which were quite ripe. By the abandonment of this plan, and by saving such for propagation as were not fully ripe, it has been observed that the evil could be entirely prevented.

The disease which for the last six or seven years has infested this useful plant, is of a very different nature. In the *potato-murrain*, as it has been called, the plant is commonly attacked after the tubers have been formed and have attained some considerable size. The leaves have been observed to be first affected. The decay usually appears as a bluish-brown spot, on the under side of the leaf, and very rapidly extends, till the whole of the plant above ground is destroyed and rotten. Often the whole process has taken place in a single night; and a field, which one day has looked healthy, green, and vigorous, has next morning exhibited only the smitten, blackened, and decaying haulm. The disease of the tuber appears to be consequent upon that of the plant: the substance of it turns brown, emits a very peculiar and unpleasant odour, and soon decays to a fetid, watery matter. The fearful ravages which this disease occasioned in the potato-crops of this and the sister country, in 1846-7, is doubtless vivid in the recollection of all. Space would fail us to detail the miseries which were suffered by the Irish peasantry in that awful winter; how the privation of food, clothing, and warmth, in that inclement season, hurried thousands to their grave from sheer starvation; how they dropped down by the way-sides; how malignant fevers, the sure successors of famine, made frightful havoc among those whom want had spared; how corpses wanted coffins; and how bodies were left without burial, from the debility which want of food had brought on their neighbours; how all the better feelings of human nature seemed to be extinguished, by the extremity of the distress: details such as these might be multiplied in their most horrible forms, but we must forbear. The facts are still too fresh in general recollection to require repetition.

Various attempts have been made to account for the potato disease. Some have attributed it to an insect (*aphis rapae*); others to volcanic exhalations; others to a peculiar state of the atmosphere;

others to minute fungi or moulds. The last supposition appears to be nearest the truth. A minute fungus (*botrytis infestans*) appears to be almost invariably connected with the disease, and is found on the decaying plants: the attack of the parasite being probably aided by some predisposition in the state of the vegetable, induced by the season or the atmosphere. It is a singular fact, that the epidemic seems to have prevailed throughout the world, and that even the wild potatoes of Chili, etc., were attacked by it. Various as were the theories as to the origin of the disease, still more numerous were the methods proposed for its cure. It does not appear, however, that any certain preventive has yet been discovered. Most methods proposed have answered in some cases, and failed in others. The cause, whatever it may have been, though still in operation, had seemed of late years to have very much abated in virulence; and it was hoped that the disease would in time disappear, where due care was taken in the cultivation. A top-dressing of quicklime was considered one of the most successful preventives of it. At the moment we write, however, the disease seems to have returned—in some places with greater virulence than in 1846. We have beside us a return from various counties in England, which gives a very black summary of the progress of the disease on the early crops. Before this paper reaches the public, however, the extent of the calamity will have been more definitely determined.

The potato has other uses besides its property as an article of food. One important application of it is for the purpose of extracting its starch. If fresh potatoes are rasped into a vessel full of cold water, the fluid will be found to assume a milky appearance; and if then strained, and allowed to stand, the water will become clear, the fecula or starch settling at the bottom: 17 lb. of starch may thus be obtained from 100 lb. of potatoes. This farina or starch is very similar to arrow-root; it is very nourishing, and if properly prepared may be kept a long time. Even diseased potatoes, if fit for no other use, may be employed for this purpose, and their starch will be as good as that of sound roots. If carefully heated till vapour rises from it, it loses its character as starch, and resembles gum. In this state it is very extensively employed, under the name of "British Gum," in the processes of calico printing, and for stiffening different fabrics.

But, important as these applications are, the main use of the potato is as an esculent. Its great value is not, however, generally appreciated. It is in part to the potato that we owe the extended term of human life that is now enjoyed in Britain: for that the *average duration* of life has considerably increased during the last century is indisputable. The banishment of at least one fearful and formidable disease also may be attributed to its universal use, and the change which it has mainly introduced into our habits as a nation has probably been the chief means of disarming other complaints of their virulence, and of rendering them of infrequent occurrence. Before the introduction of the potato, carrots and turnips were equally unknown in England, and the main diet of the people used to be butcher's meat, with ale and bread. During

at least two-thirds of the year, the great bulk of the population lived on salted meat, and without any vegetables but bread. In those days, one of the most fearful scourges of England was scurvy; not that slight affection of the skin popularly known by that name, but a malady of great malignity and virulence, accompanied with frightful ulcerations and a general putrid tendency of the fluids of the body. Every winter this pest swept off multitudes in these northern regions, and afflicted thousands more with sufferings which caused them to drag on a weary existence. In the British force of 6000 troops, stationed about a century since at Quebec, 1000 were swept away by scurvy in one winter; and 2000 more were so shattered in constitution, from the same cause, that they were obliged to be sent home. It has been most conclusively proved that this awful scourge was the effect of a deficiency of vegetable food, together with the free use of salt provisions; the use of a vegetable diet, in persons affected with it, having always been attended with the prompt amendment of their symptoms, and frequently with an entire restoration to health. To the potato then, as furnishing us with an abundant, cheap, and wholesome vegetable diet, especially during winter, are we mainly indebted for our almost total exemption from this disease. In some of our prisons, it has occurred that the diet of the prisoners, though amply sufficient in other respects, has contained no potatoes, or only a small quantity of them. The consequence has been, that scurvy has broken out among them, but has been promptly removed on the addition of a few pounds of this vegetable to the weekly dietary. During the construction of the Hawick railway, the navvies, in consequence of the high price of potatoes, lived on meat and bread; and, as the sure result, an epidemic of scurvy broke out among them. These, then, are some of the uses of the potato—a vegetable which well deserves the appellation of "the friend of man."

**THE NEGLECTED GUIDE.**—It is surprising to notice how this sacred book is neglected by sinful men. The votaries of taste and fashion will spend their days and nights poring over the morbid pages of sensual and fictitious narrative; yet if their God were to ask them if they had read the Book which He sent them from heaven, where would they look? How could they say that they had never read the precious book throughout? Wherever you go, learn not of those. Take your Bible in your hand; make it the companion of your way. In the thirsty desert of this world it will supply you with the water of life; in the darkness of doubt and apprehension it will cast a gleam of heaven over your path; in the struggle of temptation and the hour of affliction it will lift up the voice of warning, encouragement, and comfort. Never let the Bible be unperused by you. It is the only helm that can guide you through the ocean of life and bring you safely to the immortal shores. It is the only star that leads the wandering seaman by the rocks, and breakers, and fiery tempests of utter destruction, and points him a way to the heights of everlasting blessedness. The Bible contains the only food that can satisfy the hungers of the soul; it presents us with the only laver in which we can wash ourselves white and be clean; it alone tells us of the garments that are worn in the courts of heaven; it is from the Bible alone that we learn to prepare a torch to conduct our footsteps through the valley of the shadow of death; and it is the Bible alone which can introduce us at last to the glories of immortality.—*Robert Pollok.*

### Notes on Australia.

**ROADS TO THE DIGGINGS.**—The state of the road from Melbourne to Mount Alexander had been so bad, even in the dry weather, some months before, that it was commonly predicted the diggers would have to depend, in a great measure, for their supplies on the arrivals from Adelaide. Recent accounts make it probable that the prediction has been realized. At one period, in May last, the rate of cartage from Melbourne to the diggings was 90*l.* for a ton weight.

**HOW TO OBTAIN A FARM.**—A Wiltshire agricultural labourer, who lately emigrated with a family of nine children, writing home to his old acquaintances, says:—"I could not think how it was possible for labouring men to get a farm, but now I see how it is. I can save money enough in one week to buy one acre of land; so, if we have health, by the time the year is out, I think of getting a little farm. I am about taking at once twenty acres of land."

**LIVING AT THE ANTIPODES.**—The Wiltshire husbandman goes on to say to his half-fed, stay-at-home friends:—"Poor people in Hodson (Wiltshire) do not know what good living is. We have now a joint of fresh meat on our table every day. Christmas day is about the middle of harvest with us. We do not take out a bit of bread and cheese into the field with us, but all come home to a good hot dinner every day. Barley-mowing is 4*d.* per acre, and rations; hay-mowing, ditto; and wheat-reaping, 12*s.* per acre, and rations. Best wheat sells at 4*s.* per bushel; barley, 2*s.* per bushel; butter 9*d.* per lb.; best beef and mutton, 2*½d.* per lb.; a good fat sheep for 8*s.*; sugar, 2*d.* per lb.; tea, 2*s.* per lb. We do not put tea into the pot with a spoon, but with the hand."

**SCARCITY OF LABOUR.**—The "Sydney Morning Herald" of the 1st of May remarks:—"Labour is scarce, and is rapidly becoming scarcer; wages are enormously high, and are still on the rise. As regards our chief city, we can safely say that never within our recollection was labour so difficult to procure as it is at the present time, nor do we believe that wages, taking all classes of operatives together, were ever so high. Not only do mechanics command their 8*s.* or 9*s.* per day, and common hodmen their 7*s.* and 7*s.* 6*d.*, but even on these terms they are scarcely to be had. And, even with remunerations like these, the working classes are far from satisfied."

**STILL THEY GO.**—From the number of fresh ships which continue to be advertised for Sydney and Port Phillip it appears there can be little falling off in the demand either for freight or passage. The total that have sailed from London, Liverpool, Glasgow, and the other ports of the United Kingdom, during September, was very large; and, indeed, it would probably not be too much to estimate the entire clearances that have taken place during the month at 70,000 or 80,000 tons. The present month will be the last this year in which the government commissioners will send out ships, although they have upwards of 20,000 applications entered in their books. This total appears particularly remarkable, when it is recollect that, during the half-year immediately succeeding the news of the gold discoveries, the departures amounted only to 54 vessels, of an aggregate capacity of 37,445 tons. The emigration, during that period, to Sydney and Port Phillip was also limited to 12,217 persons, being probably not more than half the number that now go out during a single month. Four-fifths of the vessels at present advertised are for Victoria.

**GOVERNMENT HOMES FOR EMIGRANTS.**—Her Majesty's Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners are about to establish emigration depots for the boarding and lodging of their emigrants after selection, as homes, prior to their departure, at London, Plymouth, and Liverpool. The London dépôt is to be not lower than Greenwich, if on the south bank of the Thames; and beneath Limehouse and Blackwall, if on the north; and sufficiently near the water-side to afford facilities for embarking: and a similar one on the Mersey for Liverpool. The London and Plymouth depots are to contain proper sleeping and other suitable accommodations for not less than 300; and the Mersey dépôt, for Liverpool, not less than 600 persons at the same time.